HORROR
EC
NO. 23
THE VAULT OF
HORROR
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FEATURING

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HORROR

TWO HORROR COMICS IN ONE!

AN EC COMIC

NO. 4

THE VAULT OF HORROR

GLADSTONE

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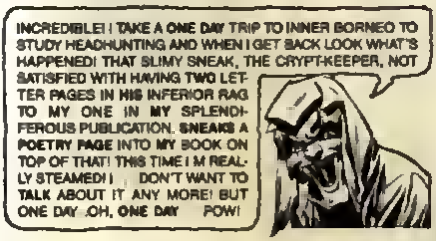

THIS ISSUE'S CREDITS

From **The Vault of Horror** #23 (1952):
Front cover art by Johnny Craig
"A Stitch in Time!" art by Johnny Craig
"99⁴⁴/₁₀₀% Pure Horror!" art by Jack Davis.
"Dead Wait!" art by Jack Davis.
"Stained ...In Horror!" art by Graham Ingels.

From **The Haunt of Fear** #13 (1952):
Original cover art by Graham Ingels
"For the Love of Death!" art by Graham Ingels
"Fed Up!" art by Johnny Craig.
"Minor Error!" art by Jack Kamen
"Wolf Bait!" art by Jack Davis
All stories colored by Marie Severin.

THE TRAGEDY OF FRANKENSTEIN

by Jim Twitchell

To understand what is going on in traditional horror we need to forget the victim's plight for a moment and just watch the monster. For what we will find is that while humans make mistakes, monsters never do. The vampire is never confused about whom to seduce, the wolfman never gets lost, Mr. Hyde never clubs bystanders. Even though their actions may appear random, monsters are never capricious. So too the Frankenstein monster, stupid as he may seem, is always smart enough to hurt only those who "deserve" it—at least from the point of view of his creator, the monster-maker. Only transitory mutants, stalk-and-slashers, zombies, aliens from outer space, or creatures from the deep are indiscriminate. (Publisher's note: the indiscriminate nature of most modern horror films—the aspect that bothers many parents today—is not what Gladstone's E.C. reprints are all about. It is for that reason we encourage young readers to share their E.C. reading experiences with their folks.

Following are some heavily-edited thoughts from a detailed section in Mr. Twitchell's book, **Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror**, published by Oxford University Press. In it he makes some interesting observations about the building of the Frankenstein monster legend.)

Every creature from the mythic black lagoon who wants to survive in retellings keeps his eye on only a few victims, a well-chosen few, a few chosen by the

martyr who is supposed to suffer most.

With this in mind, we turn to the infancy of the most important "Incredible hulk" in our folklore—the Frankenstein monster. First, he has not always been so inarticulate as he now appears, in fact, before Hollywood lobotomized him, he was far and away the most erudite of monsters, birthed from a specific work,

(continued on inside back cover)

The Vault of Horror No. 4, February 1991. Published bi-monthly by Gladstone Publishing, Ltd., 212 S. Montezuma, Prescott, AZ 86303. **Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at Prescott, AZ and additional mailing offices.**
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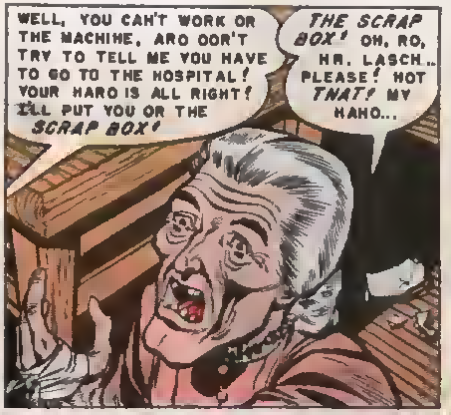
Annual subscription rate $12.00 for six issues, $17.00 Canadian and foreign, payable in U.S. funds. Printed in the U.S.A. **Postmaster: send address changes to The Vault of Horror, P.O. Box 2078, Prescott, AZ 86302.**

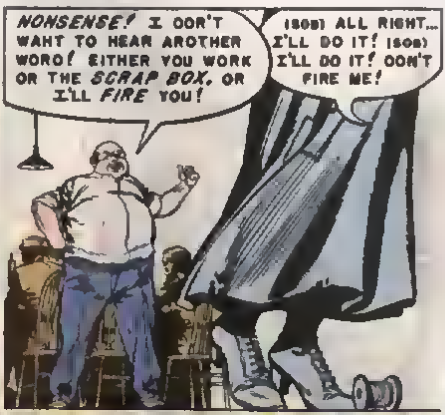
THE VAULT OF HORROR!

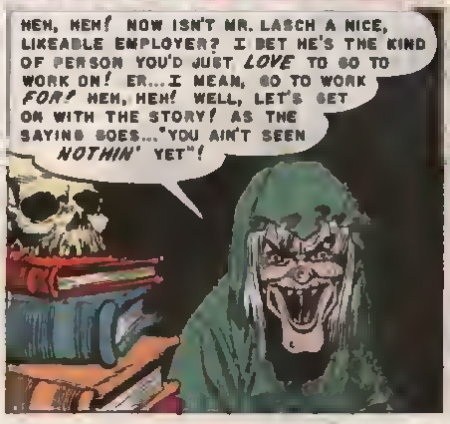
FOURTEEN HOURS A DAY, SIX DAYS A WEEK! AND ALL WE GET IS SIX DOLLARS! IT'S SLAVE LABOR!
THE LEAST MR. LASCH COULD DO IS GIVE US SAFE MACHINES TO WORK WITH!
I COULD DO WITHOUT SAFE MACHINES... BUT I'M SURE WE DESERVE MUCH BETTER LIGHTING! I'M GOING BLIND!
SLOWLY BUT SURELY WE ALL ARE! BUT THERE'S NO USE COMPLAINING! NOTHING CAN BE DONE ABOUT IT!
IF WE ALL QUIT, THAT WOULD FIX MR. LASCH!
NO... IF WE QUIT, HE'D EASILY FIND OTHERS WILLING TO TAKE OUR PLACES! AND THEN WHERE WOULD WE BE?
YOU'RE RIGHT! TIMES ARE TOO HARD! BUT IF THINGS WERE DIFFERENT...
WELL, THEY AREN'T! THIS SWEATSHOP IS JUST ONE BIG DEATH TRAP!
I JUST DON'T LIKE THE WAY HE BULLIES US... PUSHES US AROUND!
NONE OF US DO! BUT SOMEDAY HE'LL GET WHAT HE DESERVES! YOU WAIT AND SEE!
I CERTAINLY HOPE I'M AROUND WHEN IT HAPPENS! I WOULDN'T MISS IT FOR THE WORLD!
I'D LIKE TO SEE HIM GET IT RIGHT NOW!
SH-HH-H! HERE HE COMES!

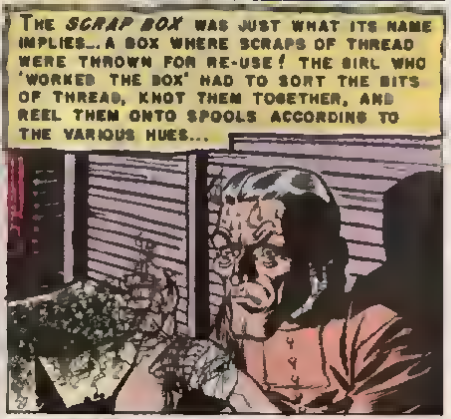
STOP FUMBLING! WHAT ARE YOU SO NERVOUS ABOUT?! EE CAREFUL, THERE! IF YOU RUIN ANY WORK, I'LL TAKE IT OUT OF YOUR SALARY!
Y-Y-YES, SIN, MR. LASCH'
AND YOU! STOP WASTING TIME! YOU'RE MAKING ME LOSE MONEY! STUPID WOMEN.. SIT HERE AND GOSSIP ALL DAY LONE! WELL, I WANT PRODUCTION!" Y'HEAR?!
OUCH! Y-YEE, NN. LASCH'
MR. LASCH... IF YOU DON'T MIND, I NEED ANOTHER SEWING NEEDLE...
WHAT?! WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU WOMEN ANYWAY? CAN'T YOU TAKE CARE OF ANYTHING?!
BUT IT SNAPPED! IT PUNCTURED MY HAND! I...
I DON'T CARE! IF YOU WANT ANOTHER NEEDLE, YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY FOR IT!
NOW GET BACK TO WORK! ..AND THE REST OF YOU STOP WASTING TIME! I WANT PRODUCTION! GET BUSY! Y'HEAR?
THE DOOR SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND THE SELFISH MR. LASCH, AND IN THE FACTORY ROOM ITSELF, AN ONINOUS HUSH PREVAILED. EACH GIRL WAS ALONE WITH HER THOUGHTS... AND YET THEIR THOUGHTS WERE AS ONE. THE CHATTER OF THE SEWING MACHINES ACCENTUATED THE DISMAL SILENCE...
AAAGGH-H!

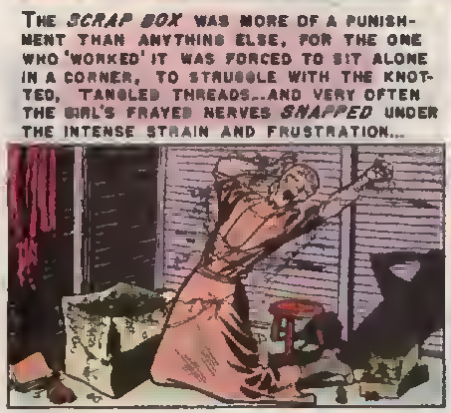
MY HAND! MY HAND!
GOOD LORD! HER MACHINE SHATTERED! LOOK AT HER HAND!
IT'S BADLY HURT! CALL A DOCTOR!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?!
MARTHA INJURED HER HAND! THE MACHINE BROKE DOWN! SHE SHOULD HAVE A DOCTOR...
WHAT?! MY MACHINE IS BROKEN?
YOU CLUMSY IDIOT! WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS PLACE IS, A PLAYROOM?! I PAY YOU TO PRODUCE, NOT TO FOOL AROUND, DAMAGING MY PROPERTY!
BUT, MR. LASCH! HER HAND...
I DON'T CARE! JUST BECAUSE SHE CAN'T WORK IS NO REASON FOR THE REST OF YOU TO STOP! GET BACK TO YOUR MACHINES!
OH, MY HAND... MY HAND!
DON'T YOU COME WHINING TO ME FOR SYMPATHY! IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT FOR BEING SO CARELESS! IF YOU HAD BEEN PAYING ATTENTION TO YOUR WORK, IT WOULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED!
BUT, MR. LASCH, THE MACHINE IS SO OLD! I DIDN'T...
BAH! NEGLIGENCE! IF YOU THINK I'M GOING TO PAY TO HAVE THAT MACHINE REPAIRED, YOU'RE CRAZY! THE COST IS COMING OUT OF YOUR SALARY!
SOB! ALL ...ALL RIGHT, MR. LASCH... SOB!
4

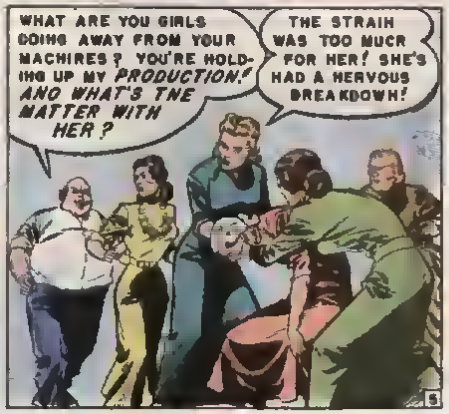

WELL, YOU CAN'T WORK OR THE MACHINE, ARO OOR'T TRY TO TELL ME YOU HAVE TO GO TO THE HOSPITAL! YOUR HARO IS ALL RIGHT! I'LL PUT YOU OR THE SCRAP BOX!
THE SCRAP BOX! OH, RO, MR. LASCH.. PLEASE! HOT THAT! MY HAHO...


NONSENSE! I OOR'T WAHT TO HEAR AROTHER WORO! EITHER YOU WORK OR THE SCRAP BOX, OR I'LL FIRE YOU!
(SOB) ALL RIGHT... I'LL DO IT! (SOB) I'LL DO IT! OOH'T FIRE ME!


HEH, HEH! NOW ISN'T MR. LASCH A NICE, LIKEABLE EMPLOYER? I BET HE'S THE KIND OF PERSON YOU'D JUST LOVE TO GO TO WORK ON! ER... I MEAN, GO TO WORK FOR! HEH, HEH! WELL, LET'S GET ON WITH THE STORY! AS THE SAYING GOES..."YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET"!


THE SCRAP BOX WAS JUST WHAT ITS NAME IMPLIES... A BOX WHERE SCRAPS OF THREAD WERE THROWN FOR RE-USE! THE GIRL WHO 'WORKED THE BOX' HAD TO SORT THE BITS OF THREAD, KNOT THEM TOGETHER, AND REEL THEM ONTO SPOOLS ACCORDING TO THE VARIOUS HUES...


THE SCRAP BOX WAS MORE OF A PUNISHMENT THAN ANYTHING ELSE, FOR THE ONE WHO 'WORKED' IT WAS FORCED TO SIT ALONE IN A CORNER, TO STRUGGLE WITH THE KNOTTED, TANGLED THREADS...AND VERY OFTEN THE GIRL'S FRAYED NERVES SNAPPED UNDER THE INTENSE STRAIN AND FRUSTRATION...


WHAT ARE YOU GIRLS DOING AWAY FROM YOUR MACHINES? YOU'RE HOLDING UP MY PRODUCTION! AND WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HER?
THE STRAIN WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER! SHE'S HAD A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN!

NERVOUS BREAKDOWN? BAH! IT'S JUST ANOTHER EXCUSE TO GET OUT OF DOING HER WORK! THE LAZY, GOOD-FOR-NOTHING TRAMP!
EXCUSE?? MR LASCH, I.
QUIET! GET BACK TO WORK, ALL OF YOU! I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF THIS LAYING DOWN ON THE JOB! GET BACK TO WORK!
C'MON, GIRLS...
HEH HEH... EH.. ER... IH... IH... IR...
GET UP, YOU! GET UP! GET TO WORK! YOU'VE GOT TO PRODUCE, T'HEAR? PRODUCE!!
SOB! CAN'T.. HEH... CAN'T... EH... CAN'T... IH.. CAN'T... IN .. IN... IN...
GET UP, I SAID! DON'T YOU KNOW YOU'RE COSTING ME MONEY?? GET UP!
HE'S INHUMAN! CAN'T HE SEE SHE'S TOO SICK TO WORK?
HE CAN'T SEE ANYTHING THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF HIS OWN SELFISH DESIRES!
WHY DOESN'T HE LEAVE HER ALONE?
WE OUGHT TO DO SOMETHING TO STOP HIM!
NO! THAT'LL ONLY MAKE IT WORSE FOR HER!
SNAP OUT OF IT! DON'T PUT ON AN ACT WITH ME! YOU'RE GOING RIGHT BACK TO WORK, YOU LAZY, WORTHLESS THING!
OW! SOB! CAN'T HER.. CAN'T! CAN'T... CAN'T... SOB!
SLAP!
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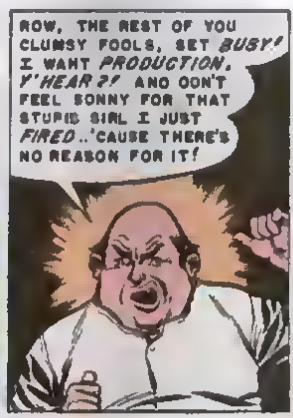
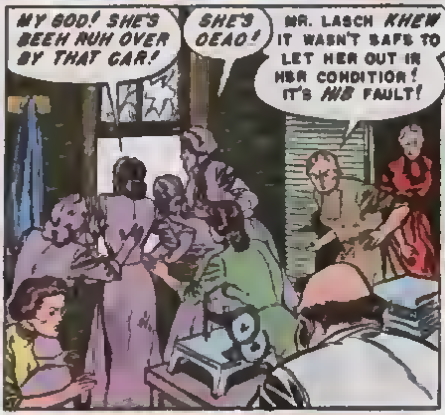
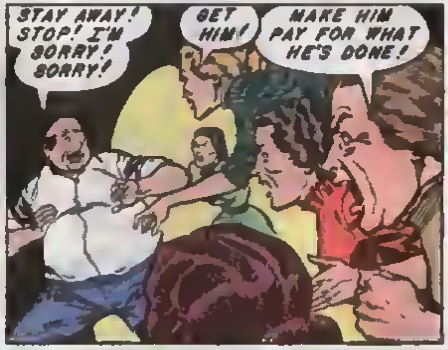


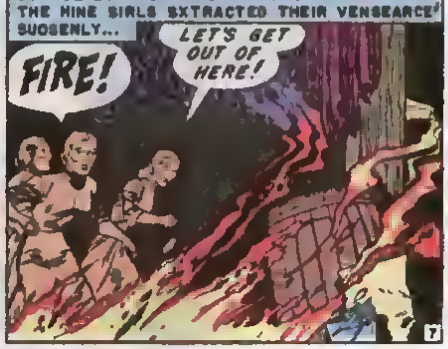


THE NINE MADDENED GIRLS TURNED TO THE NOW COWERING MR. LASCH! HE SENSED THEIR HATE—AND AS THEY RUSHED HIM, HE SCREAMED.



IN A BODY, THEY THRUST THE TERRIFIED SHOP OWNER ONTO ONE OF THE SEWING MACHINES! THEY POUNDED HIM WITH FISTS, CLAWED AT HIS FLESH IN THEIR LUST FOR REVENGE—

FOR MANY MINUTES THEY CROWDED AROUND HIM— HIS SCREAMS CEASED, BUT HIS BODY CONVULSED AND SHOOK WITH SPASMS AS THE NINE GIRLS EXTRACTED THEIR VENGEANCE! SUDDENLY...



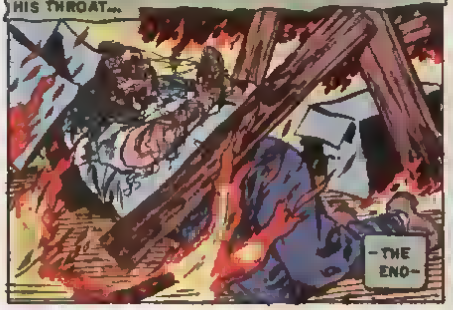
IN A FEW SECONDS THE GIRLS HAD FLED! THE FLAMES LEAPED AND ROARED WITH FURY THROUGH THE TINDER-BOX SHOP...WHILE ON THE SEWING MACHINE A FIGURE STIRRED...

MR. LASCH STARED IN HORROR... BUT HIS MOUTH MADE NO SOUND... FOR HIS LIPS HAD BEEN STITCHED *TOGETHER!*

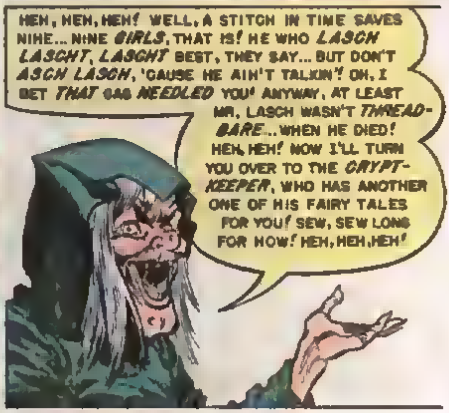
WITH HIS FEET HOBBLED AND HIS HANDS SEWN TOGETHER, HE STUMBLED CLUMSILY IN HIS FRANTIC ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE THE BLAZING INFERNO! SUDDENLY, HE STAGGERED INTO A ROW OF SHELVES... A LARGE *SCRAP BOX* CRASHED DOWN...

THE SNARLED THREADS CASCADED UPON HIM, ENTANGLING HIM IN A WEB OF HIS OWN MAKING! HIS PROGRESS STOPPED AND HIS STITCHED FINGERS GROPED DESPERATELY TO FREE HIM OF THE ENTWINING THREADS...

SPASMODICALLY, AS THE FIRE CLOSED IN AROUND HIM, HIS BODY TWISTED IN AGONY! THE SEARING FLAMES DREW NEARER AND THE WALLS AND ROOF BEGAN TO COLLAPSE! FROM BEHIND THE RAGGED STITCHING ON HIS LIPS, A MUFFLED CRY GURGLED AND DIED IN HIS THROAT...



HEH, HEH, HEH! WELL, A STITCH IN TIME SAVES NINE... NINE *GIRLS*, THAT IS! HE WHO *LASCH LASCHT, LASCHT* BEST, THEY SAY... BUT DON'T *ASCH LASCH*, 'CAUSE HE AIN'T TALKIN'! OH, I BET *THAT* WAS *NEEDLED* YOU! ANYWAY, AT LEAST MR. LASCH WASN'T *THREADBARE*...WHEN HE DIED! HEH, HEH! NOW I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THE *CRYPT-KEEPER*, WHO HAS ANOTHER ONE OF HIS FAIRY TALES FOR YOU! SEW, SEW LONG FOR NOW! HEH, HEH, HEH!

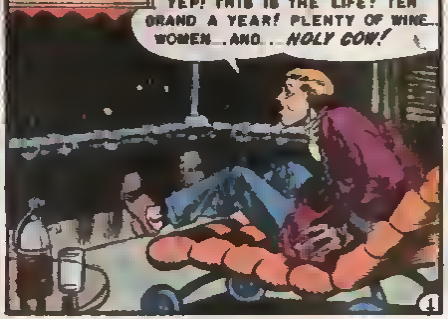


THE CRYPT OF TERROR

READY FOR ANOTHER *HAIR-RAISING TERROR-TALE* FROM MY VAST COLLECTION THAT I KEEP HERE IN MY *CRYPT*? GOOD! THEN COME INTO THE *CRYPT OF TERROR!* SIT DOWN NEXT TO YOUR HOST-IN-HORROR.. THE *CRYPT-KEEPER*...AND I'LL BEGIN THE *BLOOD-CURDLING* LITTLE YARN I CALL

99 44/100% PURE HORROR!

ERNIE SPRAWLS LAZILY ON THE ORNATE CHAISE LOUNGE THAT STANDS ON THE TERRACE OF HIS PENT-HOUSE APARTMENT! HE SMILES UP AT THE BLACK, STAR-STUDDED SKY AND GRINS! YES! LIFE HAD BEEN GOOD TO ERNIE MATTSON EVER SINCE HE'D BECOME MANAGER OF THE NUDSON SOAP FACTORY..EVER SINCE POOR OLD BENNY ANDERSON "MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED"...



ERNIE SITS UP SUDDENLY... STARING AT HIS WATCH.

CRIPES! I ALMOST *FORGOT*! I HAVE A DATE WITH THAT *SHOW GIRL* TONIGHT! I'VE JUST ENOUGH TIME TO *SHOWER* AND *DRESS*!

SPRINGING FROM THE WHOOSHT IHOR LOUNGE CHAIR, ERNIE DARTS THROUGH THE FRENCH DOORS INTO HIS LAVISHLY FURNISHED APARTMENT...

LET'S SEE! WHAT THE HECK WAS HER *NAME*? I CAN'T *REMEMBER*!

ACROSS THE THICKLY CARPETED LIVING ROOM, INTO THE MODERNISTIC BEDROOM, ERNIE SPRINTS! QUICKLY, HE UNDRESSES AND STEPS INTO THE RICHLY TILED BLACK BATHROOM...

THAT'S FUNNY! SHE TOLD ME HER NAME! OH, WELL, I'LL THINK OF IT.. *WHAT THE...?*

ERNIE STARES DOWN AT THE EMPTY GLEAMING SOAP-DISH...

HEY! *HOW* CAN I TAKE A SHOWER WITHOUT ANY *SOAP*? WONDER IF THERE'S *ANOTHER* CAKE IN THE PANTRY?

ERNIE ECHOS A ROSE AND CROSSES THE LIVING ROOM TO THE NEAT LITTLE KITCHEN. HE SWINGS OPEN THE PANTRY DOORS, HIS EYES SEARCHING THE CAN-LINED SHELVES..

THAT'S A NECK OF A NOTE! *ME*, THE *MANAGER* OF THE *HUDSON SOAP FACTORY*... *WITHOUT A CAKE OF SOAP IN THE HOUSE*...EXCEPT... *EXCEPT*...

A COLD SHIVER RUNS UP ERNIE'S SPINE! HE MAKES HIS WAY SLOWLY TO A SMALL CABINET IN THE LIVING ROOM! FROM A RING OF KEYS, HE SELECTS ONE AND CAREFULLY INSERTS IT INTO THE LOCK ON THE CABINET DOOR! THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN! THE CABINET IS FILLED WITH SMALL RECTANGULAR PACKAGES...

...EXCEPT FOR *THESE* BARS OF SOAP! I...I NEVER *INTENDED* TO USE *THESE*!

SUDDENLY ERNIE BURSTS OUT LAUGHING! HE REACHES INTO THE CABINET AND PULLS OUT ONE OF THE NEATLY WRAPPED PACKAGES...

AH-H! WHAT DO I CARE *HOW*, BENNY! I *GOT* YOUR JOB! NO ONE'S THE WISER! *WHAT'S* THE USE OF RAMBLING ON TO THEM *NOW*?

AS ERNIE SHUFFLED BACK ACROSS THE PLUSH LIVING ROOM, UNWRAPPING THE CAKE OF SOAP, THE SOUND OF A TRUCK HORN BELOW DROVE UP FROM THE STREET BELOW! THE SOUND IS A FAMILIAR ONE TO ERNIE! THREE YEARS AGO... WHEN HE FIRST STARTED TO WORK AT THE HUDSOAP FACTORY...IT MEANT...
HONK!
HEY, ERNIE! LET'S GO! ANOTHER TRUCK'S AT THE UNLOADING PLATFORM!
YES, MR. ANDERSON!
BENNY ANDERSON WAS MANAGER OF THE FACTORY BACK THEN! ERNIE'S JOB WAS TO UNLOAD THE TRUCKS READED HIGH WITH SCRAP MEAT THAT HAD BEEN COLLECTED FROM BUTCHER SHOPS AND RESTAURANTS THROUGHOUT THE CITY! ERNIE RATED THE WORK
CHOKE...PHEW! LORD, THIS STUFF STINKS!
EVER SMELL OLD DECAYING SCRAP MEAT, KIDDIES? IF YOU HAVE, YOU KNOW WHY ERNIE HATED HIS JOB! SOMETIMES THE SMELL WAS SO BAD...
ERNIE! WHEN YOU GET THROUGH WITH ...WITH...S'MATTER, KID? YOU SICK?
UH... HUH...
BUT ERNIE'S STUCK TO IT... AND AFTER A FEW MONTHS, HE WAS PROMOTED TO THE RENDING VATS...
GOT THAT VAT FULL OF WATER, ERNIE?
YEAH, BENNY! SHE'S FULL! AND THE SCRAPS'RE IN...
LISTEN, YOU! CALL ME MR. ANDERSON, SEE? CUT THAT 'BENNY' STUFF! I HAPPEN TO BE THE BOSS HERE!
OKAY... MISTER ANDERSON...
THE RENDING VATS WERE HUGE CAULDRONS INTO WHICH THE SCRAP MEAT WAS PLACED! THEN THE VATS WERE FILLED WITH WATER...
OKAY! FINE 'N UP!
YES, SIR... MISTER ANDERSON... SIR!
AFTER THE WATER IN THE VATS CAME TO A BOIL, THE FAT AND OILS IN THE MEAT ROSE TO THE SURFACE OF THE BUBBLING LIQUID...
OPEN THE DRAIN-OFF VALVE!
RIGHT!

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THEN THE WATER WAS DRAINED OFF FROM THE SOTTOM OF THE MASSIVE BOILINS KETTLES, AND THE REMAININS MOLTER FATS ARO OILS WERE SAPONIFIED...
OKAY! ADD THE LYE!
YES, SIR!
THE RAW SOAP WAS PERFUMED ARO RUN OUT ONTO COLD ROLLERS WHERE IT SOLIDIFIED! THE RANDOMED SOAP WAS THEN FLAKED OFF THE ROLLERS AND PRESSED INTO THE FAMILIAR SOAP CAKE..
C'MON! LET'S KEEP IT MOVING! LET'S GET THOSE CAKES TO THE WRAPPING MACHINE!
ERNIE OBSERVED BERRT ARDENSON! BENNY WAS CONSTANTLY ON HIS NECK, MAKING IT TOUGH FOR ERNIE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU WENT OUT FOR A SMOKE? I'LL TELL YOU WHEN YOU CAN TAKE A BREAK!
OKAY, OKAY...
BUT IN SPITE OF BENNY ANDERSON'S CONSTANT NAGGING, ERNIE CONTINUED TO ADVANCE HIMSELF IN THE HUDSON SOAP FACTORY! SOON, HE BECAME ASSISTANT MANAGER.
SO NOW YOU'RE MY ASSISTANT, EH, ERNIE? WELL, YOU'D BETTER KEEP ON THE BALL!
DON'T WORRY, BENNY! I KNOW YOU'D LIKE TO GET RID OF ME!
IT LOOKED LIKE ERNIE'D MOVED UP ABOUT AS HIGH AS HE COULD GO IN THE FACTORY! AS OLD MR. HUDSON PUT IT...
SURE, ERNIE! I KNOW YOU'RE A CAPABLE WORKER! BUT WHAT CAN I DO? ARDENSON'S JOB WOULD BE YOUR NEXT STEP BUT HE'S NOT LEAVING!
YEAH! I UNDERSTAND, MR. HUDSON!
THE OLD MAN WAS RIGHT! BENNY'D BEEN THERE FOR YEARS! HE WASN'T LEAVING! ERNIE'D NEVER BECOME MANAGER UNLESS...
...UNLESS SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HIM! WHAT IF HE...JUST... DISAPPEARED?
ERNIE MADE UP HIS MIND! HE WAS GOING TO KILL BENNY ANDERSON! IT WOULD BE EASY... VERY EASY! ONE NIGHT...AFTER THE FACTORY WAS DESERTED..ERNIE RETURNED! BENNY'D STAYED TO CHECK THE INVENTORY...
WHAT WAS THAT? WHO...WHO'S THERE? OH... IT'S YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING...HERE THIS TIME OF...ERNIE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH THAT KNIFE?

ENNIE ENOUENT THE KNIFE
EOWN...AEAIN AND AEAIN...
UNTIL EENNY'E LIFELEEE EODY
LAY COVENED WITH ELOOE!
TNEN RE CANNIED TNE COMPSE
TO TNE NENDING VATE ..

TREAK'LL BE *NOTHING LEFT*
OF YOU WHEN *I'M* TNNOUEH,
EENNY!

IT TOOK ENNIE ALMOET AN
NOUN TO OIEWENEEN EENNY'S
EODY! TNEN NE FILLED TNE
VAT WITH WATEN AND FINEE
IT...

...ANE NHKN YOU EON'T EHOW
UP FON WONK FON A FEW
DAYS, *I'LL* EE *MANAEER*
OF THE HUDEON SOAP
FACTONY!

AFTEN THE WATEN CAWE TO A
EOIL, ANE THE FATS ANE OILS
EATHENEE ON THE EURFACE,
ENNIE OPENED THE ONAIN-OFF
VALVE ANE TNE NENDENED
REMAINE OF EENNY ANDENSON
WENE NUN OFF INTO THE WAETÉ
EINE WHENE TNEY WIXED WITH
TRE NEET OF THE EAY'S NEN-
DENED ECNAPE..

TOMONNOW MONNINE, KNIGHT
AND EANLY, THEY'LL *EMPTY*
TNIE EIN AND CART IT
AWAY...

TNEN ENNIE CONTINUED THE EOAP-WAKINE PNOC-
EEE WITH TRE FATE AND OILE NENDENED
FNOM EENNY'S NEWAINE...

HEN, NEN! *LOOK* AT YOU, EERNY!
LOOK AT YOU *NOW!* JUET A COUPLE
EOZEN CAKEE OF EOAP!

AT FINET, ENNIE'D PLANNED ON *DESTROYING*
TRE EANE OF EOAP THAT HAD EEEN WADE
FNOM EERNY'S DIEWEWEENED CORPEE...EUT A
WEINE, STRANEE FAECINATION MADE HIM
EKCIDE...

NO! I WON'T TNNOW THEW AWAY! I'LL
KEEP THEW...TO *REMEMBER* YOU EY!

ANE EO ENNIE WATTEON EECAME MANAEEN OF
THE NUDKON SOAP FACTONY! ANE WITN NIE
PNONOTION, CAWE THE FAKULOUE EALANY
THAT EOON ENOUENT HIW THE CLOTNEK, LUX-
UNIOUE APANTWENT, AND THE NALO LIFE HE'D
ALWAYE WANTED...

NENK'S TO *YOU*, EERNY!
THANKS...FON *EVERYTNING!*

NOW ENNIE ENUFFLED INTO THE NICNLY TILED
ELACK EATNROOM...THE CANE OF EOAP IN NIE
HAND...

VIRGINIA! THAT'S HEN NAWE!
NOW I NEWENEEN! WRAT
A EONEEOUS BABE!

ERNIE STEPS INTO THE BLACK-TILED STALL SHOWER AND SLIPS THE CAKE OF SOAP INTO THE WALL RECEPTACLE! CAUTIOUSLY HE TURNS THE FAUCETS, ADJUSTING THE TEMPERATURE OF THE WATER..
GOTTA BE CAREFUL! THEY CERTAINLY SEND UP SCALDING HOT WATER IN THIS JOINT!
WITH THE TEMPERATURES OF THE SHOWER SPRAY TO HIS LIKING, ERNIE BEGINS TO SOAP HIMSELF.. WORKING UP A FOAMY LATHER...
TUM-TA-TUM-DE-DUM-DUM! MY HEART GOES FOR YOU.. DUM-TA-DUM DUM-DE-DUM!
SUDDENLY, ERNIE'S EYES BEGIN TO ITCH! FOOLISHLY, HE LIFTS A SOAPY HAND TO RUB THEM
OOWWWWWWW!
THE SOAP IN HIS EYES IS LIKE ACID! THE PAIN IS EXCRUCIATING! ERNIE DROPS THE BAR OF SOAP...REACHING FOR THE FAUCET...
MY EYES! THEY'RE BURNING!
BLINDLY, ERNIE FUMBLES FOR THE FAUCETS! HIS HAND CLOSES ON ONE! HE TURNS IT..
OH, LORD! THAT'S THE COLD WATER I'VE SHUT OFF!
FRANTICALLY, ERNIE REACHES THROUGH THE SCALDING STREAM OF WATER, TRYING TO FIND THE HOT WATER FAUCET..
OWWW! DRAT IT! IT'S TOO HOT! MY EYES! MUST GET OUT OF HERE...
ERNIE TURNS, STILL NOT ABLE TO SEE, AND REACHES FOR THE STALL SHOWER DOOR HANDLE! BUT SOMETHING SLIMY SKIDS FROM BENEATH HIS FOOT
YAAAAAAAAAAH!

ERNIE LAYS SPRAWLED ON THE SMOOTH FLOOR OF THE STALL SHOWER. HIS RIGHT LEG HORRIBLY DISTORTED AND TWISTED...

MY LEG! IT'S BROKEN!

THE SCALDING SHOWER OF HOT WATER POURS DOWN UPON THE CRUMPLED SCREAMING FIGURE

I...I CAN'T GET UP!

EEEEEEAAAAAAGH!

ERNIE, HIS EYES TORTURED WITH THE BURNING SOAP SUDS, HIS LEG PAINFULLY BROKEN...THE SCALDING WATER STREAMING DOWN ON HIM...TRIES IN VAIN TO REACH FOR THE SHOWER DOOR! HE CANNOT LOCATE IT! IT LIES JUST BEYOND HIS GROPING FINGER TIPS.

H-E-L-L-P! FOR GOD'S SAKE...

SLOWLY, THE STEAMING WATER BEGINS TO FILL UP THE STALL SHOWER, RISING UP THE THRASHING FIGURE UNTIL IT REACHES HIS BEET-RED FACE.

I'M GOING TO DROWN!

WITH ONE LAST PAIN-WRACKED EFFORT ERNIE TRIES TO SET UP... BUT HIS BROKEN LEG COLLAPSES AND HE SINKS BELOW THE SURFACE OF THE WATER FILLING THE STALL SHOWER...

A-A-A-G-LUG-G-G-G-G

WHEN THE SUPERINTENDANT INVESTIGATED THE COMPLAINT THAT THE CEILING IN THE APARTMENT BELOW ERNIE'S WAS DRIPPING WATER, HE FOUND THE WATER-FILLED STALL SHOWER WITH ERNIE'S RAW-LOOKING DEAD BODY...

GOOD LORD! HE MUST HAVE *FALLEN* WHILE SHOWERING! HE *DROWNED!*

LOOK! THAT *BAR OF SOAP!* IT'S *STUFFING* UP THE DRAIN!

HEH, HEH! YEP! ERNIE *WAS* LATE FOR HIS DATE THAT NIGHT! WELL... THAT'S WHAT *HAPPENS* WHEN A MURDERER WANTS TO *COME CLEAN* SO *BENNY* FINALLY WORKED HIMSELF INTO A *LATHER* AND GOT HIS *REVENGE*. EH? ALL I CAN SAY IS *MORE POWDER* TO HIM... *SOAP* POWDER, THAT IS!

HERE'S A TALE THAT'S A REAL HAIR-RAISER! IT OUGHT TO RATE TOPS WITH YOU! I CALL IT..

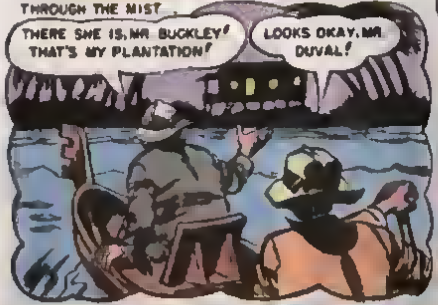
DEAD WAIT!

THE TROPIC NIGHT HUNG OVER THE ISLAND LIKE A WET BLANKET, HOT AND OPPRESSIVE! FROM OUT ACROSS THE BLACK PACIFIC, A FAINT BREEZE STIRRED, MOVING LAZILY THROUGH THE TOWERING COCOANUT PALMS! THE PLANTATION HOUSE LAY SILENT BENEATH THE STARRY SKY! SUDDENLY TWO SHOTS RANG OUT...

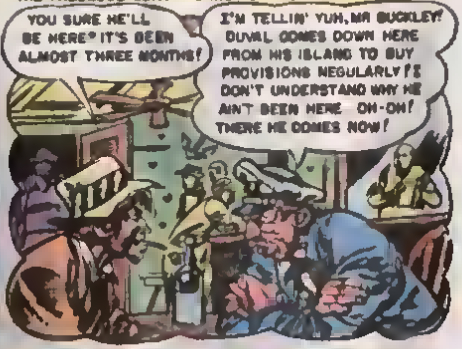
'RED' BUCKLEY STOOD OVER THE PROSTRATE BODY OF HIS FORMER BOSS...THE PLANTATION OWNER, EMIL DUVAL! A TINY WHISP OF SMOKE DRIFTED UPWARD FROM THE BLACK MUZZLE OF THE AUTOMATIC THAT 'RED' HELD FIRMLY IN HIS HAND. STILL POINTED AT THE DEAD FRENCH PLANTER...

BEHIND THE RED-HEADED BURDENER, A SMALL COAL-BLACK NATIVE CRINGED IN THE SHADOWS, WATCHING WITH WIDE EYES! BUCKLEY STEPPED OVER DUVAL'S BODY AND MOVED TO A SMALL SAFE IN THE WALL OF THE PLANTATION HOUSE...
HOW' NIGHT, TEN... LEFT TO SIX NIGHT AGAIN TO TEN...
THE DOOR OF THE SAFE OPENED, AND 'RED' REACHED IN...
FOUR YEARS I'VE WAITED! FOUR YEARS... AND NOW IT'S MINE!
'REE' HELD THE VELVET-BLACK SPHERE UP SO THAT THE LIGHT FROM THE KEROSENE LAMP DANCED OVER ITS GLEAMING SURFACE.
FINALLY... THE BLACK PEARL IS MINE! LOOK AT IT, KULU! THERE IS NO PEARL IN THE WHOLE WORLD LIKE THIS ONE!
THE COWERING NATIVE STARED AT THE PEARL FROM HIS HIDING PLACE IN THE SHADOWS! THE WHITES OF HIS EYES SHONE BRIGHTLY, REFLECTING THE GLOW OF THE FLICKERING LAMP...
WHAT ARE YOU FRIGHTENED OF, KULU? DUVAL IS DEAD! STOP CRINGING LIKE A FRIGHTENED MONKEY! COME OUT OF THERE! HERE, LOOK AT IT! MY BLACK PEARL!
THE NATIVE SHUFFLED FORWARD... HIS EYES GLUED TO THE SMALL BLACK SPHERE THAT 'RED' HELD BETWEEN HIS FINGERS! HE STUDIED IT FOR A MOMENT... THEN EXCLAIMED...
COME, MISSAH BUCKLEY! WE GO NOW! BOAT READY! WE GO... HURRY-HURRY!
YEAH, KULU! LET'S GO! MY BUSINESS HERE IS FINISHED!
'REE' TOOK A LAST LOOK AT THE DEAD PLANTER SPAT, AND FOLLOWED THE NATIVE OUT THE DOOR! THE TWO FIGURES MOVED SILENTLY DOWN TO THE BEACH WHERE A NATIVE OUTRIGGER CANOE WAS PULLED UP ON THE WHITE SAND...
GOT ENOUGH FOOD AND WATER, KULU?
YESSA, MISSAH! GOT PLENTY...
BUCKLEY CLIMBED INTO THE OUTRIGGER AND KULU SHOVED OFF INTO THE ONCOMING SURF...
WELL, KULU! IN THREE DAYS WE'LL BE IN BANGOA! AND I'LL BE CATCHIN' THAT STEAMER, EH?
THREE DAYS! YESSA, MISSAH BUCKLEY!

As the outrigger skimmed over the crests of the incoming breakers, 'Red' watched the flickering lights of the plantation-house fade into the night! It had been four years ago that he'd first seen the lights of the plantation shining through the mist...



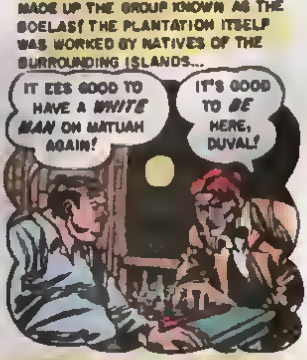
Red'd waited three months in Banggai for Duval to show up! He'd spent almost a year tracing the fabulous Black Pearl to this French planter...



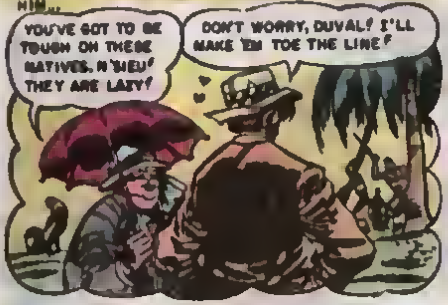
Red'd approached the jovial looking Frenchman and introduced himself...

Duval'd been thrilled at having another white man on the island with him! He'd jumped at the chance...

Duval's plantation was located on one of the many islands that made up the group known as the Boelas! The plantation itself was worked by natives of the surrounding islands...



Duval'd been sick with some tropical disease! that was why he'd been detained getting down to Banggai! And that was why he'd hired Red! The fever'd left him weak! Red could take over the physical work of running the plantation FOR HIM...



Duval and Buckley'd become quite friendly in the year that followed! Finally, one night, Red'd worked the conversation around to precious gems...

BLACK PEARL, DUVAL? YOU'VE SEEN ONE?
OUI, M'SIEU! I HAVE... SEEN ONE!
BUCKLEY'D TRIED TO PUMP DUVAL BUT THE OLD FRENCHMAN'D CLAMMED UP! THAT WAS ALL HE'D SAY ABOUT THE BLACK PEARL RED WAS SURE HE OWNED! THEN ONE NIGHT...
WHO'S OUT YHERE? COME OUY OF THOSE BUSHES OR I'LL SHOOY!
NO SHOOT, MISSAH!
THAT'S BEEN KULU! HE'D BEEN HANGING AROUND BUCKLEY'S BUNGALOW...
WHAT WERE YOU DOING OUT THERE?
MEAN NO HARM, MISSAH! WANNA BE HOUSE-BOY... SERVANT. ANYTHING ...TO YOU, MISSAH!
KULU'D PLEADED WITH RED TO LET HIM STAY! HE WANTED TO BE RED'S SERVANT! RED'D FINALLY GIVEN IN...
OKAY, KULU! YOU CAN STAY! BUT KEEP OUT OF MY HAIR, SEE?
YAHSAH, MISSAH! YAHSAH!
IT WAS AFTER TWO YEARS OF HARD WORK THAT RED'D FINALLY WORKED HIMSELF INTO DUVAL'S CONFIDENCE! ONE NIGHT THE OLD FRENCHMAN GAVE OUT...
YOU ASKED ME ONCE EEF I EVER SAW A BLACK PEARL, M'SIEU? YOU REMEMBERE?
YEAH, DUVAL! I REMEMBER!
WELL, M'SIEU! NOT ONLY HAVE I SEEN ONE... I OWN ONE!
YOU DO? WHERE? LET ME SEE IT!
OH, NO, M'SIEU! THE PEARL IS WORTH A FORTUNE! WE ARE TWO MEN ALONE ON THEES ISLAND! IT WOULD BE FOOLISH FOR ME TO TELL YOU WHERE I KEEP IT! NOY THAT I DON'T TRUST YOU...
OH...YEAH! I DON'T BLAME YOU, DUVAL! I'D DO THE SAME THING! FORGET IT!

ANOTHER YEAR'D GONE BY BEFORE REO'D FINALLY FOUND OUT...
SEE THAT PICTURE... THERE ON THE WALL, M'SIEU?
YEAH?
BEHIND IT IS A SAFE! THAT IS WHERE I KEEP THE BLACK PEARL!
SEE, DUVAL! I'D REALLY LIKE TO SEE IT!
NO, M'SIEU! TEMPTATION IS A GREAT.
TELL YOU WHAT, DUVAL! YOU HOLD A GUN ON ME ALL THE WHILE! THEN I WON'T YAY ANYTHING!
DUVAL'S FALLEN FOR IT! HE'D GONE TO THE SAFE.. LOADED GUN IN HAND... AND TAKEN OUT THE BLACK PEARL...
IT'S BEAUTIFUL, DUVAL! LOOKS LIKE IT'S WORTH A FORTUNE!
AT LEAST A QUARTER OF A MILLION, M'SIEU!
BUT REO'D GOTTEN THE INFORMATION HE'D WANTED! HE'D MEMORIZED THE COMBINATION OF THE SAFE! NOW, ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A GETAWAY...
WHAT WOULD I DO, KULU, IF I WANTED TO GET AWAY FROM THIS PLACE AND GET TO SANGGAI?
TAKE MISSAH DUVAL'S MOTOR LAUNCH, MISSUH BUCKLEY! THAS NOW HE GO ALLA TIME...
NO, KULU! I MEAN IF I WANTED TO GET TO BANGGAI SECRETLY.. WITHOUT ATTRACTING ATTENTION!
I COULD YAKE YOU THERE IN NATIVE CANOE... MISSAH! TRIP LONG... THREE DAYS MAYBE...
EVERYTHING WAS SET! REO'D WAITED FOR THE ANNUAL STEAMER TO COME TO SANGGAI! THEN, FOUR DAYS BEFORE...
GET THAT OUTRIGGER, KULU! WE'LL NEED IT... TONIGHT!
YESSAH, MISSAH!
9

AND NOW IT WAS OVER! RED HAD THE PEARL AND KULU WAS PADDLING HIM TOWARD BANGSAI! THE LIGHTS OF DUVAL'S PLANTATION WERE GONE NOW...

LOOK AT IT, KULU! THERE'S NO PEARL IN THE WHOLE WORLD LIKE THIS ONE! AND I WORKED LONG, TOO... FOUR YEARS... TO GET IT!

KULU REMAINED SILENT! HE STARED OUT OVER THE VAST EXPANSE OF WATER AS RED RAVED ON...

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU HUNG AROUND AS LONG AS YOU DID, KULU! I TREATED YOU PRETTY ROUGH SOMETIMES!

KULU DID NOT ANSWER! UP AHEAD, DANCING LIGHTS PINPOINTED THE GLOOM...

S'MATTER, KULU? YOU SORE AT ME? DON'T WORRY! I'LL PAY YOU OFF IN BANGSAI! I'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOU! I'LL... NUH?

FAINTLY... BUT GROWING EVER STEADILY LOUDER... THE THROB OF DRUMS DRIFTED ACROSS THE TOSSING BLACK EXPANSE...

WHAT'S THAT, KULU? DRUMS! NATIVE DRUMS! WE'RE HEADED TOWARD THEM! KULU? WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?

THE ISLAND LOOMED UP BEFORE THEM! THE FIRES LIT UP THE BEACH... ILLUMINATING THE GLEAMING, DANCING FIGURES! BUCKLEY SPUN AROUND! KULU STOOD OVER HIM... THE MACHETE IN HIS HAND REFLECTING THE FIRELIGHT...

KULU! MY GOD! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?

I WAIT LONG TIME TOO, MISSAH BUCKLEY!

THE GLEAMING STEEL BLADE CAME DOWN WITH LIGHTNING SPEED... SEVERING RED BUCKLEY'S HEAD FROM HIS SHOULDERS... CUTTING SHORT HIS BLOOD-CURDLING SHRIEK...

YAAAAA-

THOK

THE BRIGHT NATIVES GATHERED AROUND KULU AS HE HELD THE HEAD WITH THE RED HAIR HIGH FOR ALL OF THEM TO SEE! AND AS THEY GLARED AT IT, HE BRANDED (IN HIS NATIVE TONGUE)...

THREE YEARS I WAIT... AND NOW, IT IS MINE! THERE IS NO HEAD IN ALL THE BOSLAB LIKE THIS ONE!

HEH, HEH! YEP, RIDDIES! THAT'S THE STORY! RED DIDN'T USE HIS HEAD! IF HE HAD, HE WOULD HAVE REALIZED THAT HE AND KULU WERE WORKIN' THE SAME RACKET... GETTING INTO A POSITION OF TRUST IN ORDER TO GET SOMETHING THEY WANTED! WELL, THEY BOTH SUCCEEDED... ONLY KULU WAS JUST A LITTLE AHEAD OF THE GAME! AND NOW, I'LL TURN YOU OVER TO THAT RAG, THE OLD WITCH... FOR HER HORROR YARN!

The VAULT-KEEPER'S CORNER

Yo, my bedevilled geek-a-zoids! Lockey here what the old Vault-Keeper has had to put up with since last we visited. Some of you letter writers are downright sick. Please, park yourselves on a nice damp slab and help yourselves to a piping hot flagon of bat squeezin's while we wade through this issue's slough of despond:

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I have numbers one and two of your comics. They are cool! "Star Light, Star Bright," "Smoke Wringe," "Silver Threads Among the Mold," "Strictly From Hunger," "This Trick'll Kill You," "Midnight Mess," and "Bedtime Gory" were COOL! I can't wait for future issues.

Noah Pokorny
Evergreen, CO

You think our stories are "cool," eh? Well, se's this Vault! As a matter of fact, it's a downright *freezing* in here! Fortunately, the Old Witch and I haven't had nerve endings for so long that it doesn't really matter.

Dear Vault-Keeper,

I don't like starting off my letters on a sentimental note, but I LOVE YOU GUYS! I think you're right V.K., why does C.K. get all the fame? He even has a TV show named after him. Personally, I think you are the best host, with your mixture of wit and delightful cannibalistic recipes. It's all so. . . so. . . tantilizing! By the way, could you make a recipe for a young, slightly overweight, 13-year-old boy? I have this brother, you see. Perhaps the Old Witch has something she'll share.

Stephen Pazio
San Diego, CA

The Old Witch gave me a few recipes as per your request. "Sizzlin' Toadie on a Stick" sounds good, but it's awful greasy. (It could make you breakout. . . but there wouldn't be much point in that unless you were in prison, eh?) Of course I could suggest a personal favorite, "Brother's Brisket," which is battered and deep fried. It's very filling but a lot of work. You might want to let the that goof of a brother of yours live and get him addicted to our fine comic books. Then you'd have something to consume!

Dear Vault-Keeper,

Once again you've proved your superiority over the boring Crypt-Keeper. But praising you is not why I'm writing this letter. I just had to voice my opinion concerning the myth that the Old Witch is a better talent than you are! If anyone thinks that you are not on the same wavelength as the Old Witch, then they are mentally ill! They should be locked up in one of your dreary vaults, then you can torture them until you get the truth out. The truth being you're the greatest dead storyteller anyone ever knew!

Tasmanian Devil
Philadelphia, PA

Oh stop! (Gushll) I only do what any self-respecting Vault-Keeper does, and that's tell better stories than anyone, alive *or* dead!

Dear Vault-Keeper,

The revival of your mag is the best thing that has happened in years. I'm a 24-year-old E.C. fanatic. I've acquired some of the original mags and purchased a hardback volume. Not only are you pleasing to old fans, but you're getting new ones too! So for some of us the stories are new. By the way V.K., I see you don't have Drusilla around the Vault anymore. Need another lady to take her place, tall, grotesque, and classy? (Hint, hint!) See ya next month! Oh, and remember that C.K. and O.W. can't come close to YOUR finesse! It's the host of the stories that help make them so entertaining to us fiend fans!

Laura Martin
Aurora, IL

P.S.: I mix wonderful Bat Bites and Bloody Marys!

Thanks a glob for your kind words, Laura! I *do* like Bloody Marys, but my favorite drink is Boil-Her-Makers with a twist of spine. (My chiropractor recommended it!) Yes, Drusilla is gone it seems. It's so hard to keep good help alive these days. I will consider your offer, though. Of course, you couldn't possibly be "classy" and still work for me!

Hey V.K.:

I was reading your first mag, and you screwed up! Ha! Ha! In "Smoke Wringe" you misspelled "gaily." I hope you know you put "gay" in your mag. HA! HA! HO! You also printed Laura when her name was Lorna. HA! HA! HA!

Abe Ramsbecker
Arnold, MO

P.S.: I hope the old Crypt-Keeper finds this funny.

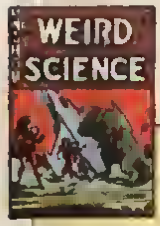
Wow, Abe, what eyes you got! I guess some people have a pretty low threshold when it comes to humor! HA! HA! I guess I was thinking of Laura Martin! HA! HA! Hope our next issue makes you laugh your head off! HA! HA! Anyway, as long as you're READING our fine magazine, find all the mistakes you want, we'll make more! HA! HA!

Ahem! Before we start having *too much fun* here, I think now is a good time to sign off for this issue. As the rock said to the moss on his back, "Thanks for 'Lichen' me!" If you've found that *I've* grown on you, don't hesitate a moment; grab a hunk of parchment and drop a line to:

The Vault-Keeper's Corner
P.O. Box 2079 • Prescott, AZ 86302 • (602) 776-1300

A RARE E.C. OFFER

Seventeen years ago a small publishing company called **East Coast Comix** reprinted a number of the original E.C.'s in full color as regular 32-page comic books. Without national distribution the market was not able to sustain their continuation. Shortly after they ceased production we bought the remaining small inventory, realizing they would become **real collector's items** someday. With the return of E.C. through Gladstone, that day has come! None of these 1973 and '74 reprints is scheduled to be duplicated by Gladstone before 1992 and some later than that. The **Shock SuspenStories** comics have no place on our schedule at the present time. The following are available individually or as a lot while the **very limited supply lasts**.



☐ **Weird Science 15**, Sept., 1952 . . . . . **$8.50**
Incredible issue, with the first E.C. story by Al Williamson, who quickly became a favorite, and "The Martians," one of Wallace Wood's best. Also, a photo and biography of Joe Orlando, who draws captive earthmen in "Sum Steer."

☐ **Shock SuspenStories 12**, Dec., 1953. . . . . **$8.50**
Drug abuse is dealt with for one of the first times in comics in the powerful Joe Orlando effort, "The Monkey." Reed Crandall's "The Kidnapper" generated mail from many parents. Wally Wood touches on suicide in "The Fall Guy." And a murderous alcoholic is portrayed in "Deadline" by Jack Kamen.

☐ **The Haunt of Fear 12**, Mar., 1952 . . . . . **$8.50**
Two rotting corpse stories highlight an issue of great art by "Ghastly" Graham Ingels and Jack Davis. Johnny Craig has a story, biography and a photo. His story of a love triangle involves two shootings and a mysterious tattoo that miraculously implicates the killer.

☐ **Weird Fantasy 13**, May, 1952. . . . . **$8.50**
Special issue with two tales illustrated by Wallace Wood, including "Home to Stay," an unforgettable adaptation of two Ray Bradbury short stories. E.C.'s science fiction and horror editor/artist Al Feldstein has a bio with photo.

☐ **Crime SuspenStories 25**, Oct., 1954. . . . . **$8.50**
Jack Kamen's lead deals with multiple murder; Reed Crandall's story involves a knife and some "cutting up" during a prison break. Bernie Krigstein's effort chronicles madness; and George Evans' yarn weaves brutal fiction of a sadistic police lieutenant.

☐ **The Vault of Horror 26**, Aug., 1952. . . . . **$8.50**
Putrid palpitations of a ghoul and a vampire in love, werewolves, walking corpses and a voodoo curse are all rendered in color by Johnny Craig, Jack Davis, Sid Check and Graham Ingels.

☐ **Shock SuspenStories 6**, Dec., 1952 . . . . . **$8.50**
One story each of crime, suspense, sci-fi and horror, plus a biography and photo of fan favorite Wally Wood. Graham Ingels illustrates a rare appearance of the Old Witch outside the horror titles. Wood's "Under Cover" is a shocker dealing with overt prejudice that was largely ignored by society in the 1950s. Great issue!

☐ **The Haunt of Fear 28**, Jan., 1954. . . . . **$8.50**
Jack Kamen does one of his famous "Grim" Fairy Tales this time a horrific version of Hansel and Gretel. A dark brooding, beautifully drawn Jack Davis swamp tale and werewolf story are also featured.

☐ **A full set of the eight classics shown above, while all are still available:** **$44.00**

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELL, THE *FIRE'S* LIT UGDER MY *CAULDRON* AGAIN SO COME INTO *THE HAUNT OF FEAR!* YER.. IT'S *ME*...*THE OLD WITCH* .. READY TO DISH OUT ANOTHER OF MY *CRAZY CONCOCTIONS* OF *CADAVEROUS COMPOUNDINGS* DEALING WITH *DISMAL DELVINGS* INTO THE *DEPRESSIVE!* EVERYBODY READY? GOOD! THEN I'LL BEGIN THE *MAD MORSEL OF MORBIDITY* I CALL...

STAIRED... IN HORROR!

IGMA LEECHMAG STARED DOWN AT THE GRAVE OF HER LATE HUSBAND! A GROTESQUE SMILE CURLED OVER HER HAGD-LOOKING FACE! THE SITING NOVEMGES WIGD SWEPT ACROSS THE MOUNDS OF BROWNING GRAGS.. WHISTLING BETWEEN THE SILGT HEADSTONES! THERE WAS A CRISP, CRUNCHING SOUND ON THE GRAVEL PATH BEHIND HER! IGMA TURNED...

OH! I... I'M AWFULLY SORRY, MA'AM! I DIDN'T MEAN TO... INTENGUPT...

THAT'S ALL RIGHT! I WAS JUST LEAVING ANYWAY!

IRMA EYED THE MILD-FACED NEWLY ARRIVED GENTLEMAN! HIS EYES WERE SOFT AND GLAZED! IRMA EXPECTED HIM TO BURST OUT CRYING ANY MINUTE! THEN SHE NOTICED THE GRAVE BESIDE HER LATE HUSBAND'S! THE MOUND WAS BARE—THE HEADSTONE NEW AND SHINING! SHE NODDED TOWARD IT...
TOURIST?
TES! MY WIFE! SHE DIED ABOUT A MONTH AGO! I... I COME HERE EVERY SUNDAY!
IRMA STIFLED THE DESIRE TO GIGGLE AT THE SENTIMENTAL OLD FOOL! THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME SHE'D VISITED HERMAN'S GRAVE SINCE HIM... DEATH! THE SAD-EYED MAN NODDED TOWARD HERMAN'S GRAVE...
MY HUSBAND! DIED ABOUT SIX MONTHS AGO! I... I'VE BEEN AWAY!
OH! THAT'S WHY I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU HERE BEFORE!
YES! I FELT TERRIBLE ABOUT NOT BEING ABLE TO COME FOR THE LAST FIVE WEEKS!
I WOULDN'T MISS A SUNDAY! ETHEL WAS SO GOOD! I... I HAVE NOTHING LEFT NOW! THE HOUSE SEEMS SO—SO EMPTY WITHOUT HER! WHY, EVEN THE SERVANTS...
SERVANTS? IRMA STUDIED HIM AS HE HANDLED OR ABOUT HIS DEPARTED ETHEL! HIS OVERCOAT WAS FASHIONABLE AND LOOKED EXPENSIVE...
IF THIS GUY'S GOT SERVANTS... HE MUST BE RICH!
...SO I COME HERE EVERY SUNDAY! THAT'S ALL I CAN DO!
IRMA SPOKE SO HER VOICE SOUNDED JUST RIGHT... WITH THAT LITTLE QUAVERING TREMOLO...
I... I KNOW... HOW YOU... FEEL, MR... MR...
HORNSBY! ROBERT HORNSBY! AND YOU ARE... MRS. LEECHMAN. I SEE BY YOUR HUSBAND'S TOMBSTONE!
IRMA DROPPED HER EYELIDS... FLUTTERING THEM A LITTLE FOR EFFECT...
OH, MR. HORNSBY! YOU'RE SO CLEVER... TO THINK OF THAT! I WOULDN'T HAVE NOT IN A MILLION YEARS!
IT WAS NOTHING, MRS. LEECHMAN!
FOR A BRIEF PERIOD, THE WIDOW AND THE WIDOWER STOOD IN SILENCE BEFORE THEIR RESPECTIVE SPOUSES' GRAVES! THEN IRMA GLANCED AT HER WATCH...
OH, DEAR! I MUST HURRY! I'M LATE! I PROMISED I'D MEET A GIRL-FRIEND FOR LUNCH!
MY CAR IS PARKED OUTSIDE THE CEMETERY, MRS. LEECHMAN! COULD I GIVE YOU A LIFT?
2

WOULD YOU ME MONNEEY? THAT WOULE EE SO EICE! EUT I WOULDE'T WAET TO TAKE YOU OUT OF YOU' WEY!
NOT AT ALL, MNE LEECHMAE! IE DE HAPPY TO! IF YOU'EE FIEISHED...?
ME MOENEEY'S CAE WAS WAITIEE OUTSIEE TEE CEMETEEY EATE ..JUET AE HE SAIE! IENA GASPED WHEN ENE SAW IT! IE TEE OPEE FRONT EEAT, E CHAUFFEUE EAT EIGIELY! IT WAS ONE OF THOSE BIG TWELVE CYLINEEE LIMOUEINES TEAT ONLY TEE VERY WEALTE! COULD AFFO-
OH, MY! WHAT AW EXQUIEITE AUTOMOEILE!
IT'S A ROLLS-ROYCE...IMPOETED FROM ENGLAND! I GAVE IT TO ETWEL FOR OUR RECORD WEDDING ANNIVERSAEY!
IENA GAVE MR. MONNEEY THE NAME OF A RESTAUEANT IN TOWE AND ME PAEKED IT ON TO THE CHAUFFEUR! TEEY SPED INTO THE CITY IE SILENCE... IENA REMENIS IN THE LUXURY OF THE CAE! WHEE THEY PULLED UP...
NEXT WEEK! OH! YES! OF COURSE!
GOOE! ALL EIGHT, ALEN! HOME...PLEASE!
IENA WALKED ON TO HEE APAWTMENT FROM WHEEE MR. MONNEEY EED SHOPPED EEN! OF COURSE SHE'E HAE NO APPOINTMENT WITE A DENTIEIEE! THAT WAS JUST EN EXCUSE SHE'E USED! WEEN SEE EEEIVED, SHE SPEAWLED ON E COUCE AEE LIT E EIGARETTE! SHE KEPT THINKIE OF TEAT CHEAT EIS EXPENEIVE CAE...
THAEN YOU SO MUCH, MR. MOENEEY! TEIS WAS VERY KIND OF YOU!
GOOE EFTER-GOOE, MEE. LEECHMAN! I'LL SEE ER... SEEING YOU... NEXT WEEK?
HE MUST EE LOADED
IENA MADE UP HEN MIND EIGHT TNSE AND THENE TEAT EOBERT MOENEEY...AND SHE GOUEE...MEEE FOE SEE! SEE TEACHES EEE LUCKY STARS THET SHE'S SUCCESFLY COTTEN TEE EEIGHT IDEA TO VISIT EEEMAE'S SHAVE TEAT EAY! SHE'E GOEE THENE FOE APPEAR-ANCE'S SAKE...SO PEOPLE WOULD THINK SHE WAS MOUEEING FOE HIM ..SO THEY WOULDN'T SUSPECT...
...SO THEY WON'T SUSPECT THE TRUTH TEAT I MURDERED THE OEUM... FOE EIS INSURANCE!
THE FOLLOWING SUNEAT- IENA WENT AGAIE TO THE CEMETEEY! AE SEE STOOE EEFOEE EEE LATE HUSBAE'S GEAVE, WAITING FOE EOBERT EOBERT TO SHOW UP, SEE SNEERED OOWE AT IT...
YOU NEVER WEEE MUCH GOOD TO ME WHILE YOU WEEE ALIVE, MEEMAW! MAYBE- NOW TWAT YOU'RE DEAD...YOU'LL BE SOME GOOD AFTER ALL! IF I CAN HOOK SOBERT MORESBY, I'LL BE SET FOR LIFE!
3

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AS IRMA WAITED FOR ROBERT HORNSBY, HER THOUGHTS WENT BACK TO THOSE HISENABLE YEARS WHEN SHE WAS MARRIED TO HERMAN LEEGHMAN...
LOOK AT THESE BILLS! ALL UNPAID! AND I HAVEN'T BOUGHT A NEW DRESS IN MONTHS!
PLEASE, IRMA! I'M WORKING AS HARD AS I CAN! LEAVE ME ALONE, HUH?
'LEAVE ME ALONE!' THAT'S ALL YOU CAN SAY! YEAH! I'LL LEAVE YOU ALONE... WHEN YOU'RE DEAD!'
AND YOU COLLECT MY INSURANCE!
YOUR INSURANCE? WHAT INSURANCE?
I TOOK OUT A POLICY! I... I WANTED TO LEAVE YOU PROVIDED FOR IN CASE ANY THING SHOULD HAP-PEN TO ME!
THAT WAS ALL IRMA'D NEEDED! THE IDEA THAT HERMAN HAD TAKEN OUT A LIFE INSURANCE POLICY IN HER NAME HAD BURNED IN IRMA'S BRAIN UNTIL SHE'D FINALLY DECIDED...
I CAN'T STAND HIM ANY LONGER! I'VE GOT TO GET RID OF HIM! I'VE GOT TO MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT!
AND THEN THE OPPORTUNITY'D COME! SHE AND HERMAN HAD GONE FOR A WEEK-END TRIP TO THE SEACOAST! THEY'D STAYED IN A RUN-DOWN TOURIST HOME! ONE EVENING THEY'D GONE OUT WALKING ON THE LONELY CLIFFS... IN THE MOON-LIGHT...
LOOK, IRMA! A DESERTED LIGHTHOUSE! LET'S TAKE A LOOK!
ALL RIGHT, HERMAN!
SHE'D FOLLOWED HERMAN INTO THE ABANDONED LIGHTHOUSE AND UP THE RUSTY WINDING SPIRAL STAIRCASE... UP... UP... UP... TO THE VERY TOP...
ONLY A LITTLE HIGHER, IRMA! I'M TIRED!
NO, HERMAN! GO AHEAD! I'M NOT TIRED!
THEY'D COME OUT ONTO THE BALCONY! THE SEA'D CHURNED AND ROARED HUNDREDS OF FEET BELOW, AT THE BASE OF THE CLIFFS! HERMAN HAD GONE TO THE RAILING... TO ADMIRE THE VIEW... ALL SILVERY IN THE MOONLIGHT! IRMA'D MOVED FORWARD... LIKE A CAT... AND SHOVED HARD...
YAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

THEY'D CALLED HERMAN'S DEATH AN ACCIDENT AND IRMA RECEIVED THE INSURANCE! NOW, FOOTSTEPS BEHIND HER INTERRUPTED HER REVERIE! MR HORNSBY APPROACHED HE SMILED AT IRMA...
GOOD AFTERNOON, MRS. LEECHMAN! YOU GOT HERE EARLY, I SEE!
YES, MR HORNSBY! AND HOW ARE YOU TODAY?
HEE, HEE! YEP! IRMA HAD IT ALL PLANNED! AND IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG FOR HER PLANS TO BEGIN WORKING OUT! A FEW MORE SUNDAYS AT THEIR RESPECTIVE LATE-SPOUSES' GRAVES... A COCKTAIL TOGETHER... DINNER... AND THEN, ONE SUNDAY.
WE'RE BOTH LONELY PEOPLE, IRMA! THERE'S NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD GO ON BEING LONELY!
ROBERT! ARE YOU PROPOSING TO ME... HERE?
WHY NOT? I'M SURE ETHEL WOULD UNDERSTAND! SHE WOULDN'T MIND! SHE'D WANT IT THAT WAY! WILL YOU MARRY ME, IRMA?
OH, YES, ROBERT! YES! I'LL MARRY YOU!
SO IRMA HOOKED ROBERT HORNSBY! RIGHT THERE IN FRONT OF HER HUSBAND'S AND HIS WIFE'S GRAVES THE PROPOSAL TOOK PLACE! AS THEY TRUDGED OFF... ARM IN ARM... THE BRISK DECEMBER WIND SWEPT BETWEEN ETHEL'S AND HERMAN'S GRAVESTONES. WHISTLING OVER THE BARE MOUNDS! AND YOU AND I... IF WE'D BEEN THERE... WOULD HAVE SWORN THAT THE WIND SOUNDED LIKE WHISPERING ... AS IF THINGS DEEP IN THE COLD EARTH WERE WHISPERING TO EACH OTHER...
WHEN IRMA AND ROBERT HORNSBY RETURNED FROM THEIR HONEYMOON, ROBERT TOOK HIS NEW WIFE TO HIS PALATIAL COUNTRY ESTATE...
WELL, IRMA! THIS IS IT! HOW DO YOU LIKE HORNBRIAR?
OH, ROGER! IT'S BEAUTIFUL! IT IT... GOOD GOD!
IRMA STARED WIDE-EYED AT THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE THAT ROSE FROM THE GLEAMING FOYER AND WOUND UP TO A BALCONY HIGH OVERHEAD! SUDDENLY, INSIDE HER BRAIN, A THROBBING BEGAN... A SOUND LIKE SURF POUNDING A
IRMA! WHAT IS IT? YOU'RE WHITE AS A GHOST!
IT... IT'S NOTHING, ROBERT... NOTHING!
8

THE FIRST THING THAT IRMA DID AS MISTRESS OF HOHENZIAR, WAS TO HAVE THE DOOR ON THE BALCONY SEALED UP! SHE REFUSED TO USE THE WINDING SPIRAL STAIRCASE

BUT, IRMA! I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

I HATE SPIRAL STAIRCASES, ROBERT... THAT'S ALL!

AFTER THAT, SHE PROCEEDED TO MAKE ROBERT'S LIFE MISERABLE BY NAGGING AND CRITICIZING HIM...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU'RE GOING TO VISIT ETHEL'S GRAVE? YOU'RE MARRIED TO ME NOW! I FORBID IT!

IRMA! HOW COULD YOU...?

IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE IRMA'S CONSTANT REPRIMANDS AND ABUSE OF ROBERT CAUSED HIM TO BECOME NERVOUS AND RUN-DOWN... AND FINALLY TO FALL SERIOUSLY ILL.

P-PLEASE, IRMA! C-CALL ...DOCTOR HAWKS FOR... ME!

DON'T BE A FOOL, ROBERT! YOU'RE NOT SICK! MAYBE YOUR STUPID EX-WIFE INDULGED YOU...BUT NOT ME! NOW GET UP!

IRMA KEPT IT UP! ROBERT GOT WORSE INSTEAD OF BETTER! ONE NIGHT, HER INSULTS TOWARD ETHEL AND HER INCESSANT TORMENTING LAUGHTER FINALLY BROUGHT ROBERT TO A MENTAL BREAKING POINT! OUTSIDE, A FURIOUS THUNDERSTORM RAGED! HE RUSHED FROM HIS ROOM

ROBERT RUSHED OUT INTO THE BLINDING STORM! HE TOOK A CAR AND SPED MADLY TO THE CEMETERY WHERE HIS FIRST WIFE LAY BURIED...WHERE HE'D MET AND PROPOSED TO IRMA! AT HIS CAR ENDED TO A STOP, ROBERT PLUNGED HIMSELF THROUGH THE DOWNPOUR TOWARD THE RAIN-KEPT GRAVE

ROBERT! COME BACK! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

ETHEL! ETHEL!

ETHEL! I'M SORRY! I'M SORRY!

ROBERT FLASHED THROUGH THE RUSHING RIVULETS THAT CASCADED BETWEEN THE GRAVEYARDS AND FINALLY REACHED ETHEL'S GRAVE! HE HURLED HIMSELF FACE DOWNWARD UPON IT... BURYING THE ROSES AROUND HER...

FORGIVE ME, ETHEL! FORGIVE ME FOR WHAT I'VE DONE!

THE RAIN CONTINUED TO POUR PITILESSLY ON ROBERT'S PROSTRATE FORM! SUDDENLY, HE WRITHED AS A FATAL HEART ATTACK WRACKED HIS BODY! THEN HE LAY QUITE STILL! THE RAIN LET UP SLIGHTLY! THE WIND CAME UP! THE WHIPPERING SEEMED TO START AGAIN! THEN...SLOWLY.. THE ODDER MUD OF THE GRAVE SEEMED TO FALL IN ABOUT THE STILL FIGURE

IN HORRIBLE, IRMA PACED THE HUGE MARBLE FOYER NERVOUSLY! SHE SHUDDERED AS SHE STARED UP AT THE OURVING SPIRAL STAIRCASE... "I'VE GOT TO HAVE THAT MONSTROSITY *TORN DOWN!* IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS... KEEPS *REMINDING* ME OF THE *LIGHTHOUSE!*"

SUDDENLY, IRMA HEARD FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE THE HUGE OAK DOOR! THE KNOB RATTLED.. SHE SWUNG IT OPEN...

"IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU DAME BACK, ROBERT! YOU..." *OH, MY GOD!*

THE THING MOVED TOWARD IRMA! IT STANK FROM OOZING GRAVE MUD! CLODS OF RANCID CRAWLING ROTTED FLESH FELL FROM ITS EYELESS FACE...

"HERMAN! NO! NO!"

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

BEHIND THE MAN-THING CAME THE WOMAN-THING! ITS HAIR WAS MATTED WITH THE CEMETERY OOZE. ITS CHEEKS SUNKEN. ITS WHITENED TEETH GRINNING IDIOTICALLY. ITS BONEY DECOMPOSING FINGERS REACHING...

"GOOD LORD! HELP ME!"

IRMA RUSHED UP THE STAIRCASE! THE THINGS SLOPPED AFTER HER! SHE TRIPPED, BRUISING HER FACE, BUT GOT UP QUICKLY AND CONTINUED ON UP THE WINDING STEPS

YEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!

IT WAS THEN, AS IRMA TRIED TO OPEN ONE OF THE BALCONY BEDROOM DOORS, THAT SHE REMEMBERED WITH HORRIFIED DISMAY...

"OH, LORD! IT'S LOOKED! I HAD THEM SEALED SHUT!"

IN THE MORNING THEY FOUND THE TWO ROTTED BODIES ON THE BALCONY! BELOW, ON THE MARBLE FLOOR, WAS ALL THAT WAS LEFT OF IRMA...

"BUT A FALL LIKE THAT WOULDN'T HAVE DONE *THIS* TO HER... *SMASHED HER BODY IN PIECES!*"

"AND WHERE DID THESE *TWO OLD CORPSES COME FROM?*"

HEE, HEE! WHAT A RHETORICAL QUESTION, EH, RIDDIES? WHERE *ELSE* DID THEY COME FROM? WHERE DO *ALL* WALKING CORPSES COME FROM? FROM THEIR *GRAVES*, OF COURSE! SO IRMA FINALLY HAD HER *WIND-UP*.. ON A *WINDING STAIRCASE!* HEE, HEE! WELL... AFTER ALL... SHE WASN'T EXPECTING HERMAN AND ETHEL TO COME *A-ROUND!*

(continued from inside front cover)

a gothic novel (Mary Shelley, 1818, revised in 1832). Most of what we know, however, comes from non-print media. The novel itself tells a confusing tale of a young man who creates a larger-than-life humanoid that then destroys much of the creator's family before presumably destroying himself.

If you ask your local preteenager he will tell you Frankenstein is the monster. It is not, of course, it is

the protagonist. Although this confusion was already in place by the turn of the century, it was compounded by the Universal motion picture and its sequels. If you ask how the audience feels about the "monster," you will probably learn a very important fact. You will learn that this creature, far more then the other horror monster, Dracula, is really sympathetic.

Frankenstein is, as George Levin has written in a collection of criticism appropriately entitled **The Endurance of "Frankenstein"** (1979), "one of the great freaks of English literature."

Feminist critics have recently seen the novel as a "woman's book." Those who assert the impersonality of texts have countered that **Frankenstein** was published anonymously and the reviewers like Walter Scott were convinced it was not only written by a man, but that the man was Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary Shelley's husband. Notwithstanding, the text itself is awkwardly written, with inconsistently plotted narrative and peopled with a host of seemingly superfluous cipher-characters. A young man, Robert Walton, writes to his sister a verbatim account of what a young scientist, Victor Frankenstein, has accomplished in creating a "monster," who, in turn, has given young Frankenstein a verbatim account of what has happened to him during four years of the eighteenth century in Europe.

Students of absurdities have a field day wondering how Victor could create a being eight feet tall from the body parts of ordinary men; how this creature could become fluent in English and French in less than a year; and exactly how the monster finds Victor's journal or a regular-sized cloak that just happens to fit someone of his prodigious size. In the story, coincidence is taken into the levels of dream life where, after all, Mary Shelley says the story was first enacted.

Hidden under the ludicrous coincidences, however, is a subtext of compelling interest that has nothing coincidental about it at all. A young man creates a being larger than life, then spurns his creation, making it monstrous, and "it" turns on him and his family. "Remember that I am thy creature," says the monster "I ought to be thy Adam, but I am rather the fallen angel, whom thou drivest from joy for no misdeed." The novel is about the birthing of a creature who enacts a systematic ravaging of the Frankenstein family by the calculated destruction of certain people. But why should the story have held our impassioned interest for so many generations? For a horror story to endure, it must not only be adaptable into different media, it must also be appealing to either sex, especially during

adolescence. The young audience, the primary audience of horror art, is uninterested in specific sexual roles.

(Twitchell, Alumni Professor of English at the University of Florida, goes on from this point in his book to interpret the saga from both the male and the female point of view. It is recommended that readers who have not encountered **Frankenstein** in school go to their library, check out a copy and read it, not for the fast thrills of modern novels, but for the appreciation of glimpsing the roots of an enduring legend.

—The Publishers)

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